

Valentine's Day, or Love is in the Air

It's that time of the year when couples show their love for each other by sending cards, flowers and chocolates. But Valentine's Day is not only about **public displays of affection**: in recent years it has also become big business. In the UK alone, more than £20 million is spent on flowers, whilst in the United States over \$1 billion is **forked out** on chocolates.

Although Valentine's Day has become a global industry with more than 80 million roses sold worldwide, the origins of the day are unclear and **hidden in the mists of time**. Nobody knows exactly who St Valentine was, although some historians suggest he was a Roman **martyred** in the third century AD by a Roman Emperor. It is said that the first **recorded** Valentine's card was sent by the **imprisoned** Duke of Orleans in 1415. It is believed that he **sought solace** from his **confinement** by writing love poems to his wife.

Valentine's Day, or its **equivalent**, is now celebrated in many countries around the world. However, the traditions often differ from place to place. In Japan, for example, it is **customary** for the woman to send chocolates to the man, whilst in Korea April 14th is known as 'Black Day' and is when the unfortunate men who received nothing on Valentine's Day gather to eat noodles and **commiserate with** each other.

Technological developments have also played their part in keeping Valentine's Day relevant in the 21st century. Valentine's **e-cards** have been **all the rage** in recent years. However, internet security experts urge web users to be **wary** as **malicious hackers** could use e-cards to spread **viruses** and **spyware**.

Valentine's cards can also be used for less than romantic purposes. Police in the UK city of Liverpool sent Valentine's cards to criminals who failed to appear in court or have not paid fines. The cards contained the verse, "Roses are red, violets are blue, you've got a **warrant**, and we'd love to see you." Who says romance is dead?

Glossary

public displays of affection – showing your feelings of liking or love for someone in public	forked out – forced to spend (colloquial)
hidden in the mists of time – too old for anyone to remember/confirm/clarify	martyred – killed because of his beliefs
recorded – known, documented	imprisoned – put in jail
sought solace – tried to find comfort	confinement – imprisonment
equivalent – here, a special occasion that has the same meaning and purpose	customary – normal, usual
commiserate with – show sympathy for	e-cards – short for electronic cards, i.e. virtual cards that are sent via the internet
all the rage – very popular	wary – here, careful
malicious hackers – people who access other people's computers with bad intentions (e.g. to look for their personal information, like credit card details, or to stop their computers working properly)	viruses – here, computer programs which can make copies of themselves, preventing the computer from working properly
spyware – computer programs that reveal the identity of a computer user	warrant – a document that gives police specific powers, e.g. the right to search or arrest somebody

Read and listen to the story online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/britain/090210_valentine.shtml

1. Reading Quiz

Are these sentences true or false? Or is the answer not given in the text? Circle the correct answer.

1. St Valentine was a famous Roman Emperor who was famous as a romantic.
True / False / Not given
2. The very first Valentine's card was sent over 500 years ago.
True / False / Not given
3. Disappointed Korean men who have received no Valentine's cards eat a special dish in April.
True / False / Not given
4. Some Valentine's cards are now sent through cyberspace.
True / False / Not given
5. Lonely policemen in Liverpool are looking for love by sending out many Valentine's cards.
True / False / Not given

2. Love idioms: guess their meanings!

See if you can match these commonly used idioms connected to love with the correct definition:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. to be head over heels in love | a. to be attracted to someone without publicly showing it |
| 2. to fall for | b. to get married |
| 3. to tie the knot | c. to fall in love to with somebody |
| 4. to have a crush on someone | d. to be very much in love |

Now try and complete the following sentences using one of the above idioms in the correct form:

1. My fiancée and I have been engaged for nearly a year so we're going to _____ in the summer.
2. I _____ one of my workmates but I'm too shy to tell him.
3. She is _____ in love with her new boyfriend. She talks about him all the time. It's getting quite boring now.
4. I _____ my girlfriend the first time I saw her and I'm still crazy about her now.

3. Wordsearch

Try to find the words associated with Valentine's Day in the puzzle below.

There are ten words to find. Words can be written horizontally (g), vertically (i) or diagonally (m)

a	s	v	r	h	j	c	u	p	i	d	t
s	h	e	a	r	t	g	r	w	u	h	k
c	h	r	y	l	o	n	c	r	n	u	c
h	t	e	h	l	n	i	o	g	r	s	e
o	f	e	r	o	x	z	u	b	a	b	a
c	c	l	o	v	t	i	p	c	r	a	m
o	s	w	a	e	n	c	l	k	e	n	r
l	f	e	i	t	f	y	e	r	s	d	t
a	d	f	g	f	a	h	r	b	j	e	r
t	w	e	r	t	e	n	c	a	r	d	o
e	s	l	a	t	e	r	e	e	m	d	s
c	o	r	o	m	a	n	c	e	w	h	e

love	chocolate	romance	wife	cupid
couple	card	husband	rose	heart

Answers

1. Reading Quiz

1. St Valentine was a famous Roman Emperor who was famous as a romantic.
False
2. The very first Valentine's card was sent over 500 years ago.
True
3. Disappointed Korean men who have received no Valentine's cards eat a special dish in April.
True
4. Some Valentine's cards are now sent through cyberspace.
True
5. Lonely policemen in Liverpool are looking for love by sending out many Valentine's cards.
False

2. Love idioms: guess their meanings!

See if you can match these commonly used idioms connected to love with the correct definition:

1. d
2. c
3. b
4. a

Now complete the following sentences using one of the above idioms in the correct form:

1. My fiancée and I have been engaged for nearly a year so we're going to tie the knot in the summer.
2. I have a crush on one of my workmates but I'm too shy to tell him.
3. She is head over heels in love with her new boyfriend. She talks about him all the time. It's getting quite boring now.
4. I fell for my girlfriend the first time I saw her and I'm still crazy about her now.

3. Wordsearch

						c	u	p	i	d	
	h	e	a	r	t					h	
c							c			u	
h				l			o			s	
o				o			u			b	
c				v			p			a	
o		w		e			l			n	
l			i				e			d	
a				f							r
t					e		c	a	r	d	o
e											s
		r	o	m	a	n	c	e			e